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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3647
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHWN/AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN 2294
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1030
RUEHG/AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN 1176
RUEHKG/AMEMBASSY KINGSTON 2997
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE 5070
RUEHSP/AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN 2030
RUEHBH/AMEMBASSY NASSAU 1129
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0286
RUMISTA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

UNCLAS SANTO DOMINGO 001266

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PHUM PREF PREL SENV DR
SUBJECT: GRUESOME MURDER OF THREE HAITIANS SPARKS
CROSS-BORDER CONCERNS

REF: SANTO DOMINGO 962

¶1. SUMMARY: The gruesome killing and incineration of three Haitians in the Dominican Republic, two of whom were minors, engaged in cutting down trees to make charcoal near the southwestern border town of Jimani on 10/20, has shocked both countries. The Foreign Ministry condemned the action, while the Public Ministry and police are devoting significant resources to the criminal investigation. On 10/22, demonstrators in Haiti protested the murders by blocking a road leading to the border. The killings came at a time when some Dominican media has been engaged in shrill Haiti-related reporting, particularly with respect to illegal logging/charcoal manufacture and the influx of illegal Haitians taking up residence on the Dominican side of the border. END SUMMARY.

¶2. On 10/20, a group of armed assailants attacked and killed three Haitians who were preparing charcoal from illegally harvested trees: Denil Desir Dinitre, Miculi Jolucu, and Jolico Ansil. Autopsies determined two of the victims were between 12 to 15 years old, and the third victim was estimated to be almost 30 years old. A fourth Haitian, Mesilis Desil, was wounded in the attack but survived and is being questioned by judicial officials. Dominican law enforcement officials reportedly have detained several Dominicans and have asked the Foreign Ministry to assist in obtaining Haitian Government cooperation to interview two Haitian "parties of interest" currently understood to be under detention by Haitian authorities.

¶3. In response to the murders, the Haitian Government issued a statement emphasizing that recurring acts of violence in the Dominican Republic against Haitians only threaten joint Haitian and Dominican efforts to maintain peaceful relations. On 10/21, local media reported that a group of Haitian human rights organizations had sent a formal letter to President Preval expressing concern over an increase in killings, acts of aggression, and mass repatriations, which have targeted undocumented Haitians in recent months. The next day, Haitian protesters blocked a road to the Haitian-Dominican border (Malpasse) as a form of protest against the three murders. On 10/23, the Dominican Foreign Ministry issued a statement condemning the murders, expressing the "hope that the justice system will act quickly against those that committed this heinous act," and noting that, regardless of nationality, such violent acts will not be condoned by the Dominican Government.

¶4. The presence of many undocumented Haitians in the

Dominican Republic has caused tension and outbreaks of violence, especially near the border region (Ref A). Over the past few weeks, some Dominican media, particularly the daily "Listin Diario," have reported extensively and in a sensational manner on the influx of illegal Haitian immigrants who now reside in the border region, as well as on the destruction of Dominican forests by undocumented and illegal Haitians looking to export the contraband charcoal for sale in Haiti. The GoDR responded to these reports by announcing plans to increase police and military forces in the region, as well as to resettle retired military and their families in the border area. Some NGOs and human rights activists have speculated that the three murders are linked to anti-Haitian sentiment fomented by this recent press reportage.

15. COMMENT: While some NGOs and human rights activists have speculated that the three murders are linked to anti-Haitian sentiment fomented by the recent media reporting and the GoDR's knee-jerk response, this remains speculation. It is also possible that the killings were due to a dispute between rival groups of illegal loggers/charcoal manufacturers (Septel will report on this trade). Nonetheless, the killings have raised awareness of violence against Haitians and those of Haitian origin in the Dominican Republic. The Foreign Ministry's condemnation of the killings, and the ongoing efforts by the police and the Public Ministry to identify the perpetrators and their motives, reflect the GoDR's recognition that incidents such as this one could have serious repercussions for its international image and its relations with Haiti. Post will continue to monitor the situation and report on any new developments. END COMMENT.

LAMBERT